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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on the Promotion
and Protection of Human Rights
Fifty-third session
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND MINORITIES

Written statement*/ submitted by All for Reparations and Emancipation, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[20 June 2001]

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*/ This written statement is issued, unedited, as received in English, from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE. *200-04306* LS

ENG

The following statement is offered by Mr. Silis Muhammad on behalf of the African American people.

We know that the United Nations does not recognize us, the African American people. Four hundred years of plantation slavery and its lingering effects have left us deprived of and denied our 'mother tongue', and thus outside of a definite place within the UN system. Although we are a people, and not a minority, in the United States we are placed within a minority status. We mimic the identity of the majority. We are buried and hidden within the majority language, culture and religion so very much that the United Nations in making its laws has left us out, it seems: it is not known immediately where we fit. This is an ongoing wrong. Throughout the Americas Region and beyond we are a people numbering 240,000,000, yet we live as if lost, without a recognized identity and without our human rights.

Since 1997 we have been delivering written and oral statements to the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. We have informed the Sub-Commission that we, the African American people, have been denied the human rights that other groups enjoy, as protected by Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which the U.S. Government has ratified. We have told the Sub-Commission how we suffer from having been denied and deprived of our original language, our original culture and our original religion. We have told the Sub-Commission that we have been in this condition, living without our identity for the past 400 years

We have informed the Sub-Commission that the U.S. Government has systematically obstructed our attempts to identify and bring dignity to ourselves. We have told the Sub-Commission that we want our international political identity restored, and as a result of the U.S. Government's acts against us, we require UN assistance. We have prayed to the Sub-Commission for specific assistance in our efforts to resurrect ourselves, and receive reparations and restoration of our human rights. Thus we are confident that the Sub-Commission is aware that human rights are not presently being enjoyed by the African American people.

We have also brought our prayers to the Working Group on Minorities: a working group of the Sub-Commission. This Working Group has been entrusted with the task of promoting the rights of minorities in accordance with the Declaration on the Rights of National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. We thank the Sub-Commission for continuing to authorize the Working Group on Minorities, and support its efforts. We recognize that the Working Group on Minorities has made a consistent effort to respond to our prayers, and bring our issues to the Sub-Commission. We would like to thank the Working Group on Minorities, and urge the members, who are also members of this esteemed Sub-Commission, to steadfastly continue their efforts on our behalf.

It is our prayer that the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights consider the following three recommendations to this, its 53rd Session:

We urgently recommend that the Sub-Commission place the African American people on its agenda, alongside indigenous peoples and minorities. By placing us on the agenda, the Sub-Commission would acknowledge that it recognizes us as a group: as we have never questioned that we belong to each other as a group. We ask the Sub-Commission to take the bold step of beginning the official UN recognition of us by placing us on its agenda. We also asked to be placed on the agenda so that the experts of the Sub-Commission may be able to consider our issues and make decisions and offer resolutions on our behalf.

We recommend that the Sub-Commission invite the Working Group on Minorities to present before it a Working Paper of the Working Group on Minorities entitled *Existence and Recognition of Minorities*, document E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2000/WP.2, written by Sub-Commissioner Mr. Jose Bengoa. We believe that presentation and discussion of this working paper will benefit the Sub-Commission by offering some alternatives to the present understanding of the situation of the African American people in the United States and throughout the Region of the Americas.

In regard to the mass cry for reparation of the African American people, which the UN is confronting at the upcoming World Conference Against Racism, we ask the Sub-Commission to put forward a specific recommendation. We ask the Sub-Commission to recommend that UN expert and technical assistance be granted

in the establishment of an inclusive forum of African American leaders from the U.S.: a forum which would serve as a model for the Americas Region. This forum would seek to determine the damage we have sustained and the means of reparation needed in order to bring about our resurrection and restoration. It would also serve as a negotiating body for the African American people in their dealings with the U.S. Government. Without UN protection, there will be dangerous potential for U.S. Government manipulation of this mass movement, as there has been with mass movements of our people in the past.